

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

- 1-3. (Canceled).
4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the dosage of manganese is in the range of from 25 to 150 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$ body weight.
5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the dosage of manganese is in the range of from 50 to 125 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$ body weight.
6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 5, wherein the dosage of manganese is in the range of from 50 to 100 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$ body weight.
7. (Previously Presented) The method according claim 21, wherein the uptake promoter is selected from the group consisting of alanine, valine, leucine, tryptophan, methionine, isoleucine, proline, phenylalanine, serine, glycine, threonine, cysteine, asparagine, glutamine, tyrosine, aspartic acid, glutamic acid, arginine, lysine and histidine.
8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein said uptake promoter is a neutral amino acid.
9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, wherein said promoter is L-alanine.
10. (Currently Amended) An MRI contrast medium composition for oral administration for examination of the liver comprising as an active ingredient a physiologically acceptable manganese (II) compound and an uptake promoter comprising one or more amino acids wherein Mn and the promoter are used in a molar ratio higher than that

at which coordination compounds between Mn and promoter are formed to a substantial degree, wherein the molar ratio of Mn to promoter is in the range of from ~~2:3~~ 2:1 to 3:1.

11-12. (Canceled).

13. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The composition according to claim 10, wherein the dosage of manganese is in the range of from 25 to 150 µmol/kg body weight.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The composition according to claim 13, wherein the dosage of manganese is in the range of from 50 to 125 µmol/kg body weight.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The composition according to claim 14, wherein the dosage of manganese is in the range of from 50 to 100 µmol/kg body weight.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The composition according to claim 10, wherein the uptake promoter is selected from the group consisting of alanine, valine, leucine, tryptophan, methionine, isoleucine, proline, phenylalanine, serine, glycine, threonine, cysteine, asparagine, glutamine, tyrosine, aspartic acid, glutamic acid, arginine, lysine and histidine.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The composition according to claim 16, wherein said promoter is selected from neutral amino acids including asparagine and aspartic acid.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The composition according to claim 17, wherein said promoter is L-alanine.

19. (Currently Amended) An MRI contrast medium kit comprising a first container accommodating a physiologically acceptable manganese (II) compound, and a second container accommodating an uptake promoter comprising one or more amino acids, and optionally, instructions for the use of the kit, the molar ratio of Mn to promoter being within the range of ~~2:3~~ from 2:1 to 3:1.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Previously Presented) A method for MRI of a mammalian liver comprising orally administering an effective amount of said MRI contrast medium composition according to claim 10.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8, wherein said neutral amino acid is selected from the group consisting of asparagine and aspartic acid.